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NOTE ON DIOGENES LAERTIUS ix. 108

The received texts accessible to me read: *τέλος δὲ οἱ σκεπτικοί φασι τὴν ἐποχὴν ὥστε σκιᾶς τρόπον ἐπακολουθεῖ ἡ ἀταραξία . . . οὔτε γὰρ τάδ' ἔλοιμεθα ἢ ταῦτα φευξόμεθα ὅσα περὶ ἡμᾶς ἔστι· τὰ δ' ὅσα περὶ ἡμᾶς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνάγκην, οὐδὲ δυνάμεθα φυγεῖν.*

For *περὶ ἡμᾶς* we should, I think, substitute in this passage *παρ' ἡμᾶς*, which is the regular phrase employed in ethical discussions of the things in our power and in debates on the freedom of the will. Cf. *παρ' αὐτὰς*, Alexander Aphrodisiensis, Suppl. Berlin, II, ii, 61. Still more common of course is *ἔφ' ἡμῖν*; but *περὶ ἡμᾶς* I think will hardly admit the meaning. It would rather contrast our immediate concerns or intimate qualities with *τὰ ἑκτός*; cf. Sextus Empiricus, *Πρὸς Δογματικούς*; A 176, *καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν λαμβάνει φαντασίαν καὶ τῶν ἑκτός*.

For the contrast with necessity cf. Aetius Plac. 1. 27. 3; Πλάτων ἐγκρίνει μὲν τὴν εἰμαρμένην . . . συνεισάγει δὲ καὶ τὴν παρ' ἡμᾶς αἵτιαν; Sextus Empiricus *Pyrrh. Hypotyp.* 29, ἀλλ' ὅχλεῖσθαι φαμεν ὑπὸ τῶν κατηγακασμένων, in contrast to *τοῖς δοξαστοῖς*, which he takes for granted are in our power; Plutarch *De comm. not.* 1071a, *τὸ πάντα τὰ παρ' ἑαυτὸν ποιεῖν*; *De Stoic. repugn.* 1041d, *καὶ πᾶς ἀμαρτάνων παρ' ἑαυτὸν ἀμαρτάνει*; Stobaeus *Eclog.* ii. 7. p. 95. 24 W, *νομίζειν τὸν ἄμαρτηκότα μὴ παρ' αὐτὸν ἄμαρτηκέναι*. In Plutarch *De Stoic. repugn.* 1044 A we should perhaps emend *ὅσα δὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν* to *παρ' ἑαυτὸν*, for *τὰ παρ' αὐτόν* is used in the same argument a few lines below.

Examples of this use of *παρά* might be multiplied indefinitely. The construction is inadequately treated in Liddell and Scott and in Kühner-Gerth, II, 1, 513. Its force is sometimes missed as, e.g., in Julian *Or.* 224B; cf. *Class. Phil. supra*, X, 231.

PAUL SHOREY

NOTE ON PLATO *Rep.* 587 C-E

When Plato calculates that a King is 729 times happier than a Tyrant, he "is only playing with numbers and must not be taken too seriously" (J. and C.). "The actual calculations are inspired by a desire to reach the total 729" (Adam). Yet, serious or not, Plato must have intended to give his calculations a semblance of plausibility, sufficient at least to carry his hearers with him. He has left us moderns a little puzzled. Two questions thrust themselves upon us: Why does Plato cube the 9? What is the meaning of *ἐπίπεδον* and the relation of the statement in which it occurs to what precedes and follows?

I need not point out the assumptions that Plato makes in order to reach the conclusion that the King and the Tyrant are distant from True Pleasure in the proportion of 1 to 9. We are content that the assumption be made, provided that we see how the thing is done. Plato is playing with words

that have a technical mathematical meaning. Even in untechnical language *μέσον* is the “middle space” or the “middle point.” Plato takes it to mean “half-way between,” when we expect it to mean simply “in between.” *ἀπόστασις* was the mathematical term for the interval in a proportion. It is so used by Plato in *Tim.* 43 D, probably so in *Rep.* 546 B, and in 587 E the phrase *τὸν δὲ τύραννον ἀναρότερον τῇ αὐτῇ ταύτῃ ἀποστάσαι* is translated “the Tyrant lives more painfully than the King *in the same proportion*” (D. and V.). It is probable, then, that *ἀπὸ τοῦ δλιγυρχικοῦ τρίτος ὁ τύραννος ἀφεστήκει* in mathematical language meant “the ratio of Oligarch to Tyrant is one-third,” i.e., with reference to distance from True Pleasure.

1. WHY DOES PLATO CUBE THE 9?

On this Adam has the following note:

What motive induced Plato to cube the distance? Was it something purely fanciful, e.g., “in order to gauge the *depth* of the tyrant’s misery” (J. and C.), or because the king and the tyrant are themselves solid creatures? I think not. He probably intended to suggest that “the degradation proceeds by increasingly wide intervals” (Bosanquet), but the actual calculations are inspired by a desire to reach the total 729.

This summary reveals one fundamental error in previous interpretations. The *distance* of the Tyrant from True Pleasure is not cubed. The final expression for the distance is *τριπλασίου ἄρα τριπλάσιον ἀριθμῷ ἀληθοῦς ἡδονῆς ἀφεστηκεν τύραννος*. The next sentence refers to the *εἴδωλον*, not to the distance, and the following *ἀπόστασιν δύον ἀφεστηκώς* refers to a ratio not intended to be thought of as linear distance.

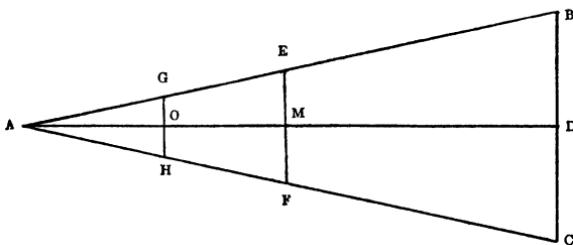
The fact that the King and the Tyrant are “solid creatures” is important, but it is not in itself sufficient to explain the cubing. The additional light that is needed is to be found in the proper interpretation of the word *εἴδωλον*, “image” or “shadow.” Let us represent the misery of the King by a stick one foot long. The King is not at the point of True Pleasure (cf. *πλείστον δὴ ἀληθοῦς ἡδονῆς καὶ οἰκείας ὁ τύραννος ἀφεστήξει*, δὲ [βασιλεὺς] δλιγυστον); we can measure his misery. Now suppose this stick to cast a shadow nine feet long upon a wall parallel to the plane of the stick. This nine-foot shadow will represent the misery of the Tyrant in *linear measure* (*κατὰ τὸν μήκον ἀριθμόν*). But there is no reason why we should not take, as the unit of measurement representing King-misery, a board one foot square. This, held parallel to the wall at the same distance, will cast a shadow that is $9 \times 9 = 81$ square feet. Then Tyrant-misery:King-misery = 81:1 in *square measure*, or reckoning *κατὰ δύναμιν*. Finally, since the King is a solid creature, let us represent his misery by a regular cube, $1 \times 1 \times 1$ ft., which, if properly held, will cast upon the wall a shadow that suggests a cube $9 \times 9 \times 9 = 729$ cubic feet. Thus, reckoning *κατὰ τρίτην αὔξηην*, King-misery:Tyrant-misery = 1:729. If this explanation is correct, we need not, with Adam, ask, “What motive induced Plato to cube the distance?” It is, indeed, impossible to conceive an adequate motive, so long as we have in mind the idea of linear distance.

2. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF *ἐπίπεδον*?

ἐπίπεδον commonly means a “plane surface” (cf. *Rep.* 528 D), but we are told that the Greeks gave to *ἀριθμοί* “numbers,” the name *ἐπίπεδοι* when they were the product of two numbers: 6, being 2×3 , is *ἐπίπεδος*. Plato has *ἐπίπεδος ἀριθμός* in *Theaet.* 148 A. Based upon this distinction there are two interpretations of this part of our passage. Schneider finds the ratio 1:9 in the sentence *τριπλασίου ἄρα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, τριπλάσιον ἀριθμῷ ἀληθοῦς ἡδονῆς ἀφέστηκεν τύραννος*. In the next sentence, *ἐπίπεδον ἄρ', ἔφην, ὡς ζούκεν, τὸ εἴδωλον κατὰ τὸν τοῦ μήκους ἀριθμὸν ἡδονῆς τυραννικῆς ἦν εἶη*, giving to *ἐπίπεδον* its ordinary meaning of a “plane surface” or “square,” he gets the squaring of the 9, and the ratio 1:81. Then, taking *δύναμιν* as *power* and *τρίτην αὐξὴν* as explanatory of *δύναμιν*, he reaches the cubing of the 9 and the ratio 1:729. This interpretation has the advantage of making the three sentences describe in succession the three ratios, and, particularly, of giving a comprehensible idea to *ἐπίπεδον*. Moreover, the explanation of the whole sentence *ἐπίπεδον . . . εἴη* may be defended with some success by comparison with *Theaet.* 148 A. On the other hand, Adam and others claim that *κατὰ τὸν τοῦ μήκους ἀριθμόν* and *κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ τρίτην αὐξὴν* give us the natural succession linear measure, square measure, and cubic measure. The claim has great weight, but in this case the sentence *ἐπίπεδον . . . εἴη* seems to carry us no farther than the preceding. In fact, it only puzzles us, for what sense is there in “the shadow of tyrannical pleasure in linear measure would be a square [number ?]?” Adam remarks:

The whole sentence is, I believe, only a way of saying that, if the tyrant is 3×3 degrees distant from true pleasure, his *εἴδωλον* of pleasure may be represented by 9. The use of the mathematical term *ἐπίπεδον* has a playful effect, both in itself and also because it sounds wilful and eccentric to express a number of one “increase” (*τὸν τοῦ μήκους ἀριθμὸν*) in terms of two.

I believe that the explanation of the passage can be reached by emphasizing the distinction of the *distance* and the *shadow*, as under 1 above. But, to make myself clear, I shall have to make use of a geometrical figure.



ABC is an isosceles triangle, with *AD* perpendicular to *BC*. *EF* and *GH* are parallel to *BC*. Then, if *AM* is $\frac{1}{3}$ *AD*, it follows that *EF* is $\frac{1}{3}$ *BC*; and if *AO* is $\frac{1}{3}$ *AM*, *GH* is $\frac{1}{3}$ *EF* and $\frac{1}{3}$ *BC*. That is, the vertical lines are proportional to their distances from *A*. Or, if *A* is the position of True Pleasure,

AO, AM, AD the respective distances from True Pleasure of King, Oligarch, Tyrant, and *GH, EF, BC* the respective shadows of King, Oligarch, Tyrant, the length of the shadows varies in proportion to the distances. Consequently, after Plato has drawn the conclusion (*ἄρα*) that "the Tyrant is, numerically, thrice three times removed from True Pleasure," he goes on to draw the conclusion (*ἄρα*) that the length of the shadow representing tyrannical pleasure is proportionally great, just as, above, the statement *ἀπὸ τοῦ δλιγαρχικοῦ τρίτος που ὁ τύραννος ἀφειστήκει* is followed by the statement *οὐκοῦν καὶ ἡδονῆς τρίτῳ εἰδώλῳ πρὸς ἀλήθεαν ἀπ' ἐκείνου ξυνοικοῦ ἄν.* Now the sentence *τριπλασίον ἄρα τριπλάσιον ἀριθμῷ ἀληθῶν ἡδονῆς ἀφέστηκεν τύραννος*, as a conclusion from what precedes, really implies the following: "If we call the King's distance from True Pleasure 1 and the Oligarch's, therefore, 3, the Tyrant's is 3×3 , or the square of the Oligarch's distance." Similarly the sentence *ἐπίτειδον ἄρ', ἔφη, ὡς ἔουκεν, τὸ εἰδώλον κατὰ τὸν τοῦ μῆκος ἀριθμὸν ἡδονῆς τυραννικῆς ἄν εἴη*, given its full expression, means: "Consequently, if, in regard to length, we call the King's shadow 1, and the Oligarch's, therefore, 3, the Tyrant's shadow would be the square of the Oligarch's." With a square unit for the King's shadow the Oligarch's becomes $3 \times 3 = 9$, and the Tyrant's the square of that, $9 \times 9 = 81$. With a cubic unit for the King's shadow, the Oligarch's becomes $3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$, and the Tyrant's again the square of that, $27 \times 27 = 729 (= 9 \times 9 \times 9)$.

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